

The Knowledge Bank at The Ohio State University
Ohio State Engineer

Title: Bovine Bells

Creators: Stout, Olin B.

Issue Date: Nov-1922

Publisher: Ohio State University, College of Engineering

Citation: Ohio State Engineer, vol. 6, no. 1 (November, 1922), 15, 17.

URI: <http://hdl.handle.net/1811/34172>

Appears in Collections: [Ohio State Engineer: Volume 6, no. 1 \(November, 1922\)](#)

"BOVINE BELLS"

Rung By OLIN B. STOUT, '24

Our Correspondent at The Front

ON the evening of the ninth of July in the year of our Lord, one thousand, nine hundred twenty-two, we had just settled down in our easy chair for a little well-earned rest after a strenuous week of reportorial labor. We had just started on our third inch of Pittsburgh smoke nuisance when our phone rang violently. We were soon talking to the feature editor of the Ohio State Engineer. We were to go down to Southern Ohio and cover the Civil Engineering Summer Camp of Ohio State University. From what we could gather, something dreadful had happened, involving the entire personnel. We were to get the story in all its gruesome details.

In another five minutes we had called Watson and he soon had the "coach and four"—with two missing—out in front with everything in readiness for the journey. By traveling all night we might reach the scene of action by noon on the following day.

About ten o'clock on the morning of July 10th, we limped into camp via one of the best, or rather worst, jokes of this "Elizabethan" Age. Verily, it must have been Henry, the 1st. Apparently the only part of the mechanism that was working properly was the timer, for we arrived just in "time" for one of Charles Wall's Kitchen Kabinet Syncopations. The orchestra consisted of kettle drums (mostly kettle), a washboard (for clean music), a salad cutter (to make it choppy) and various pieces of china (to lend a touch of the Oriental). Our arrival was apparently disconcerting, for the concert was soon discontinued.

The camp site was chosen with a sight more foresight than usual considering that summer camps and some are not. It was located in Lawrence Co. (meaning cow pasture) and in close proximity to a rural institution of learning. By a series of casual questions, aimed with studied carelessness, we were able to ascertain the reasons for the unusual location. Prof. Sloane informed us that he chose the site near the school in order that the men might not lose sight of the fact that they were still students and form entangling alliances that might prevent their return to school. The grazing arena was for the benefit of the Mexican wrestlers—that they might feel in their element. All of which leads up to our story.

It seems that the cows were accustomed to browse in the vicinity of the school just about four A. M. Whether this was due to the educational influence or whether their regular nocturnal itinerary brought them here on schedule, we were unable to determine, but this we did learn:

Every cow was the more or less proud wearer of a bell and even the bulls had "rings" in their noses. This custom, we later learned, extended to horses and mules and even to some of the

"lower" animals, such as sheep. Each owner had his own particular bell, enabling him to locate her "cowship" by sound, which you will admit is sound logic.

It is a generally accepted fact that the darkest hour is just before the dawn and likewise the last forty winks of slumber are worth more to the tired engineer than all the rest of the evening spent on a [rural] date with some bucolic effeminate. While the boys are wrapped in the arms of Morpheus, enter the bovine element with the tinkling adornment—and thereby hangs a tail. It was at first thought that after two or three nights it would cease to be troublesome, so the boys stayed in a nearby town the first two nights, but all to no avail. After continued interruptions, the embryo engineers appointed a ways and means committee, which means a committee of "ways that are dark," to deal drastically with the porterhouse alarm clocks. At first it was thought that a few well placed stones might prove effective in eliminating the evil, and such a course might have been successful in dealing with our more refined co-ed cows of O. S. U., but not so with those hardy hay-absorbers. They were raised in the mining region, where flying missiles were all in the day's routine. Seeing that more radical action would be necessary to combat the evil, the committee offered a prize to the man who could invent a "Maximum" silencer for those bells. Here was an unusual case where a dumb bell was really desired.

As is always true, in the face of danger some man steps forward and saves the "rest" of the community. The hero's modesty and a magistrate prevent us from divulging his name, but his solution was awfully efficacious. He advocated the amputation of the bells from the respective cows. All hands agreed that this was the best method of dealing with the situation.

Accordingly, on the following morning when the visiting bovines stole into camp, their bells were removed and deposited in various places, some in mattresses, some in boots and some in transit boxes. One found its way into the coffee pot. (This last almost caused the "firing" of the cook; he was accused of putting blackstrap in the coffee.)

All went well until the lowdown herd came winding o'er the hill *sans* buckles, *sans* bells. After a few back porch conventions, the country folk assumed a bellicose attitude, and dispatched post haste an "ambassador-plenipentiary" in the person of a much be-whiskered and tobacco-juiced constable. He dashed into camp on Sunday morning, armed with a search warrant, and demanded the purloined bells. His description called for two, one of which was an heirloom, having been in the family for thirty years. A mass meeting was hastily

(Continued on page 17)

"BOVINE BELLS"

(Continued from page 15)

called, and the high Mogul of the camp addressed the men on the merits of various policies, finally ending with the statement that Honesty was a better "policy" than either "20 years" or "life." He then rendered this ultimatum: At the end of five minutes the missing chimes were to be placed in the instructor's tent or else——. When that time had elapsed, four bells had made their appaerance, but none answered the descriptions furnished by the irate farmers. By noon nothing further had developed. Another meeting was called and this tme a limit of thirty minutes was given. At the end of a hectic half hour four more bells turned up. Eight bells—and still all was not well. After the arm of the law had made one more trip, the matter was finally cleared up to the apparent satisfaction of all concerned, but even to this day in a certain locality of the campus district the clear tinkle of a bell is frequently heard and members of the camp tell me that on very dark nights their sleep is troubled by the distinct sobbing of a cow, while from the remote regions of Lawrence County comes word from time to time that the farmers are still "beefing" about the missing bells.
